




The impact of rural–urban migration in South Africa: A case of KwaDukuza municipality



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Background: The influx of people to urban areas has strained government resources, increased population-growth and increased housing infrastructure challenges. The government has been slow react in addressing the problems and as a result, crippling the service delivery.

Aim: This study aimed to assess the negative impact of rural-urban migration in KwaDukuza municipality to improve the living conditions that have been compromised by rural-urban migration.

Methods: The researcher followed the qualitative method of enquiry and the main methods used in data collection were semi-structured interviews. Sampling was done conveniently and purposively. Data was analysed thematically.

Results: The high rate of population growth in Ilembe District Municipality is due to the lack of sound economic opportunities in the rural areas. The neglect in regard to the provision of basic infrastructure in the rural areas has also resulted in high rural-urban migration. Rural economic hubs can create rural economic activities and assist in managing rural-urban migration.

Conclusion: South Africa continues to see a rise in rural-urban migration due to a lack of suitable and sufficient investment in rural development. Regrettably, due to the country's economic imbalance, the urban influx of individuals looking for better economic opportunities and employment keep increasing. The study recognises the need of managing rural-urban mobility, which poses a substantial danger to rural development as well as burden on urban infrastructure.

Contribution: The study informs the policy makers on labour market adjustment and structural transformation, possibly resulting in economic implications in terms of growth and aggregate welfare of citizens.

Keywords: rural–urban migration; negative impacts; underdevelopment; urbanisation; South Africa.

Introduction

The concept of rural–urban migration is influenced by a variety of factors, ranging from voluntary immigration (responding to the desire for better life prospects and labour market conditions) to forced immigration (displacement from native region). The aim of this article is to assess the negative impact of rural–urban migration in KwaDukuza municipality. This study is premised on the push–pull theoretical framework because of the theory's ideological argument that the possibility of migration from rural areas to urban areas is based on specific socio-economic factors. According to Bello-Schunemann and Aucoin (2016), urban migration is regarded as a rational decision weighing projected advantages against costs. Rural–urban migration is therefore a response to factors that influence the desire for urban life over rural living, such as improved income, education quality, health services available in the city or negative income shocks in the rural areas. Migration barriers, particularly policy-induced ones, restrict labour market adjustment and structural transformation and so are undesirable (Cattaneo & Robinson 2020). This article discusses the driving forces behind the increased informal settlement population and the concomitant impact thereof on South African municipalities. The discussion and conclusion sections of the paper highlight research gaps and policy lessons.

The study was prompted by rising population numbers showing a 37% increase in KwaDukuza municipality's population, versus a backlog in fundamental community service provision

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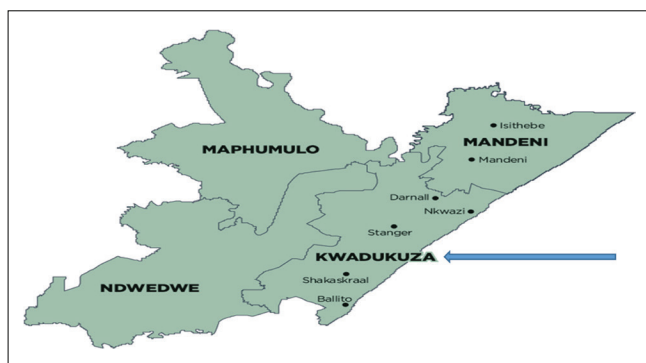
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(KwaDukuza municipality Integrated Development Plan 2020). Considering this surge in population and the strain on existing municipality infrastructure, rural–urban migration poses detrimental environmental, health and welfare hazards in KwaDukuza municipality. This research therefore sought to investigate the negative effects of rural–urban migration to municipalities in South Africa.

Background and municipal overview

The research was carried out in KwaDukuza municipality, one of Ilembe District Municipality's four local municipalities. The Ilembe District Municipality is one of the 10 district municipalities in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The Ilembe district municipality consists of four local municipalities, namely: Mandeni, KwaDukuza, Maphumulo and Ndwedwe. Out of these four local municipalities under the Ilembe district municipality, Maphumulo and Ndwedwe are completely rural, while Mandeni and KwaDukuza municipalities are peri-urban. The KwaDukuza municipality is a coastal region 67 km away from Durban along the Indian Ocean. Figure 1 shows the KwaDukuza municipality location within the Ilembe District area.

The KwaDukuza municipality (formerly known as Stanger) occupies a coastal and inland stretch of approximately 734.971 km² area of jurisdiction, with a variety of clustered and ad hoc settlements and small towns. The settlement patterns show that the urban development is primarily located in the formally established towns of: KwaDukuza, Shaka's Kraal; Ballito; uMhlali; Blythedale Beach; Tinley Manor; Zinkwazi and portions of Groutville. Peri-urban to semi-rural settlements occur throughout much of the centre of the municipality, and these extend from the northern boundary via KwaDukuza, Groutville and uMhlali to the southern edge bordering eThekweni. The name KwaDukuza epitomises the historical background of the area being the home to King Shaka and is built on the original site of King Shaka's Royal settlement called Dukuza. The population dynamics of KwaDukuza municipality is highly diverse due its multi-racial composition and rich settlement history. The KwaDukuza municipal area is characterised by areas where major service backlogs exist. The needs vary from a



Source: KwaDukuza Integrated Development Plan, [2021] 2022, viewed 15 June 2022, from <https://www.kwadukuza.gov.za/IDPdoc/KDM%20Final%20IDP-2019-2020%20.pdf>

FIGURE 1: Location of KwaDukuza municipality.

predominant need for safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity in the more rural to peri-urban areas, to basic sanitation and housing in the more urban informal and peri-urban areas. The municipality addresses the backlogs, while also maintaining the acceptable level of services in the already developed areas.

Historical context of urbanisation in South Africa

South Africa has made tremendous legislative changes since 1994 in order to address its socio-political and economic challenges. The legislative changes were necessitated by the need to address poverty, racial inequality, unemployment and change the bureaucracy that was meant to serve only the minority in South Africa (Matzopoulos et al. 2020). South African municipalities needed somehow to balance the need to address issues such as the housing backlog (through the Reconstruction and Development Programme) with environmental protection. Matzopoulos et al. (2020) suggest that the laws that were designed to alleviate the mass poverty and injustice inflicted on the people by the past regime have had negative outcomes in terms of environmental degradation.

Urbanisation is a global phenomenon, with some 56% of the world's population residing in cities and the figure is expected to reach 68% by 2050 (OECD 2020). Urban migration is mainly driven by the economic prosperity in urban centres as people relocate to cities in search for employment or to take advantage of the urban market for trading and various economic activities. The World Bank (2021) indicates that over 80% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the world is generated in cities, as factories and industries are mostly found in urban areas, hence a pulling factor for urbanisation (Ringwood 2016).

Urbanisation refers to the migration of populations from rural to urban settings and the consequent physical changes to urban settings (United Nations 2022). According to Stats SA (2021), urbanisation can be formally defined as the increase in the urban population of a country or area because of the following components of urban population growth: (1) urban natural increase, (2) urban net migration and (3) the reclassification of parts of the rural population into the category 'urban' (because of the sprawl of existing urban areas into their rural surroundings or the development of new towns in former rural areas). Tacoli (2020) presents term 'urbanisation' as the population shift from rural to urban regions, the corresponding decline in the number of individuals living in rural areas and the manner in which societies adapt to this change. As more people move into urban centres to live and work, towns and cities primarily grow through this process.

Migration affects people with economic, social, educational and demographic peculiarities. Eze (2016) highlights that migration follows a variety of patterns on space dimension such as 'rural–urban; urban–rural; urban–urban; and rural–

rural'. Rural–urban migration results from movement from rural to urban in the search for opportunities because of rural–urban inequality in wealth and better quality of life found in urban centres. Urbanisation can therefore be defined as the migration of people from rural areas to urban areas for socio-economic reasons.

According to the World Bank (2021), cities and towns should increase the speed with which they are providing facilities to cater for the demands of urbanisation. However, the large influx of people from rural areas has put tremendous strain on cities across South Africa, causing traffic congestion, housing infrastructure backlogs, and, to some extent, a rise in crime rates. As a result, rural–urban migration has posed a significant challenge to both rural and urban communities in South Africa. The speed and scale of urbanisation brings challenges, including meeting accelerated demand for affordable housing, well-connected transport systems and other infrastructure, basic services as well as jobs (World Bank 2021). The aim of the study was therefore, analysing the negative consequences of migration in South Africa, both in rural and urban areas.

Besides the job opportunities that are a reality in urban areas, the migration to the towns and cities is a result of the neglect of rural communities in terms of service delivery. Urban areas are better supplied with social infrastructure than rural areas (United Nations 2022). As a result, people who can afford to buy or rent accommodation migrate with their families to urban areas (Amoo, Wuraola & Adebanke 2013). According to the United Nations projections, by 2030, South Africa's population living in urban areas will be 71.3%, with possibilities of increasing to 80% by 2050 (United Nations 2022). While this could be good for economic development, it also goes with developmental imbalances between the urban and rural areas. The increase in rural–urban migration may prejudice the rural development through loss of skilled labour, prolonging the poverty and underdevelopment cycle (Mlambo 2018).

Urbanisation in South Africa can be traced through its historical context. Before the National Party took over the government of South Africa in 1948, discriminatory laws had already been passed by its predecessors. The most important laws that left South Africa with the current urbanisation status were 'the Native Act or Urban Areas Act of 1923' and 'the Native Land Act, 27 of 1913' (SAHO 1913). This legislation impoverished black people as they were forced off their farms and became farm labourers. It was because of the implementation of these Acts that black South Africans are still migrating from rural areas to urban areas to find job opportunities. Under the *Native Land Act*, black people could own only 13% of the land in South Africa, and the remainder was to be owned by colonial settlers (Jili & Masuku 2017). The new democratic government of South Africa has had to embark on legislative changes to address the socio-economic gaps created by Apartheid legislations (Thompson & Wissink, 2018).

As a result, there is no doubt that the legislative changes have transformed the political landscape in South Africa, but the question of whether post-Apartheid legislation has brought about economic change is still a matter to be debated (Kuddus, Tynan & McBryde 2020). Nnadozie (2013) argues that the South African government has however not been able to ensure the accessibility of basic services to most of its citizens, which is part of the reasons why people leave rural areas for urban areas. Hence, people migrate to urban destinations to access the available basic services that were initially established to serve the minority during the Apartheid era. Reddy (2016) alludes that basic services provide for community needs, and they include water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and other necessities as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

The predicament of urbanisation

The KwaDukuza municipality population has experienced exponential growth because of several factors, with rural–urban migration as the main cause, especially among the labour force (Antal & Bhutani 2022). Considering the rate of unemployment in South Africa, most people who migrate from rural areas to urban environment are motivated by economic factors (Baseler 2021). The KwaDukuza Integrated Development Plan (IDP) (2021/22) indicates that South African social services are lagging behind in municipalities because of the population growth experienced in the past 15 years. The IDP document mentions community services that have a huge backlog in terms of service provision, such as waste collection, water and sanitation and electricity provision.

As per the United Nations' definition, urbanisation is the gathering of people in urban areas (UN Habitat 2022). Although the definition does not explain where these people are coming from, this study tries to cover the context at which people are forced to migrate from rural areas to urban areas. The causes of rural–urban migration are illustrated following the theoretical framework, but in more detail the study explored the urban setting, where rural migrants find themselves in vulnerable situations. The circumstances lead to disparate ways of survival that comes with negative impact on the environment, diseases and fiscal pressure to South African municipalities (Chokoe & Meso 2017). For instance, residents may complain about the poor electricity supply in a particular area because of the high volume of connections in a particular electricity transformer, exceeding its capacity. In such instance, the municipality may need to upgrade the transformer, but the budget must permit this as well.

Rural–urban migration is influenced by several complex and divergent factors (Meso et al. 2016). Meso et al. (2016) point that unplanned urban growth that often results in infrastructural insufficiency such as housing, water and sanitation and other basic services are among the factors that motivate people to migrate to urban areas. As a result, services such as solid waste removal and health services become heavily compromised because of the additional

number of people needing these services, and there is no additional budget (KwaDukuza IDP 2021/22). This strains the budget for both capital and operational purposes. Bello-Schunemann and Aucoin (2016) add factors that other urbanisation scholars do not mention, such as conflict. Factional fighting and historical rivalries in rural areas also trigger urbanisation. The authors also mention that there is dissatisfaction about public services in rural areas that results in people migrating to cities and towns.

Causes of rural–urban migration

According to Brand South Africa (2014), there is still a significant outflow of people from rural to urban regions, putting more pressure on the government to solve the issue through policy initiatives. According to Rees et al. (2017), rural–urban migration is not solely a South African issue, because developed countries also see large numbers of people relocating to regions regarded to be better in terms of living and working. As a result, rural–urban movement can be regarded in the perspective of international migration, in which individuals travel from underdeveloped to developed regions in quest of economic opportunity and higher living standards.

Higher wages

Melo and Ames (2016) opine that rural–urban migration is mostly motivated by the availability of higher wages and working conditions in the target location, similar to international migration. Africa is known for its high migration rates, which are primarily because of people seeking economic opportunities in neighbouring nations. Over the years, a large number of teachers and medical professionals in South Africa have preferred to work in metropolitan regions, and the government has been hesitant to address this developing problem (Liang et al., 2020).

Employment opportunities

In most situations, migration is motivated by a desire to grow and develop economically through the pursuit of new possibilities, and this is the primary motivator for people to migrate. However, these causes fluctuate from country to country and area to region. Fast-growing economies and widespread industrialisation characterise such urban centres, making them popular destinations for job seekers.

Health and education services

Apart from employment and higher income opportunities, access to urban amenities can also be a key factor motivating rural–urban migration. Diamond (2016) argues that because of compensatory differences that link wages to amenities and costs of living, considerations about the rural–urban migration should also focus on both the role of wages as well as accounting for the living costs and amenities. According to Manirakiza (2014), rural people are mostly alienated from the conditions in which they live. Another cause of rural alienation is the poor provision of basic services such as libraries, electricity, water and sanitation (Meso et al. 2016).

Shilpi et al. (2014) confirm that local migrants attach a value to infrastructural developments and services, such as electricity accessibility and proximity to paved roads. It is important to note that urban amenities that might attract migrants may extend beyond infrastructure to also include social and educational opportunities in cities.

The effects of rural–urban migration

Increased unemployment rates

According to Meso et al. (2016), South African towns and cities attract not only educated people but also uneducated people and unskilled labour looking for employment opportunities. Unfortunately, city life has its own challenges, as new migrants continue to come and add up to the numbers of the unemployed (Chakoe & Meso 2017). This inevitably results in further urban poverty, which is aggravated by the continuing urban population growth. It is important to bear in mind that urban population growth is driven not only by rural–urban migration. There are other contributors to urban population growth such as the influx of foreigners, of people who are moving from one province to another and the high birth rate being experienced throughout South Africa. The South African population recorded in 2010 was 50.72 million people, and by 2018 the population had grown to 57.7 million (StatsSA 2019). As a result, the unemployed labour force resort to informal economic activities to ensure its survival.

Overpopulation and rise in crime rates

COGTA (2015) contend that the informal urban economic sector absorbs a bigger proportion of the uneducated and unskilled labour force than the formal sector. Chakoe and Meso (2017) allude that the migration of unskilled and uneducated people to cities contributes to urban poverty, which then becomes a burden to the urban authorities. The unskilled and uneducated new migrants often do not find jobs or find jobs with low incomes (Meso et al. 2016). With a low income it is difficult to rent formal urban accommodation. This then results in the mushrooming of slums on the periphery of urban areas. The crime rate and other social ills such as drug dealing are also on the rise in urban areas (Ntakirutimana 2018).

Housing provision and traffic congestion

Increased rural-to-urban migration has already put a strain on housing services in cities such as iLembe municipality, and the continued influx of people will undoubtedly put cities under significant strain to meet the rise in population (Wakefield 2015). As more people migrate to cities, traffic congestion will become increasingly difficult to manage. As more people own automobiles, there will be an increased likelihood of vehicle congestion.

Loss of skill and innovation for the rural community

Migration of people deprives rural areas of skilled workers who can contribute to rural development. Rural areas end up

losing skilled and innovative people to urban centres, which unfortunately prolongs underdevelopment and poverty in rural areas because few have the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute to development and growth (Shezi 2013). The loss of skilled workers could have the negative effect of rural–urban movement on rural communities. In South Africa, many people prefer working in cities because they perceive them to be superior in terms of living standards and economic prospects, hence many competent professionals leave rural areas.

Overburdening service delivery systems

Chapter 8 Section 73 (c) of the *Municipal Structures Act*, 32 of 2000 provides for the delivery of basic services to the community. People know that when they settle on the periphery of an urban area, the local authorities have an obligation to provide basic services such as water and sanitation, refuse removal, electricity and other basic necessities like health services. It is for this reason that service delivery protests are the order of the day. Mutenyoka, Tirivangasi and Mugambiwa (2017) argue that the alleviation of extreme poverty in communities in iLembe municipality has nothing to do with a small budget allocation but rather with policy making related to the deeper understanding of the extent and dynamics of poverty.

Guiding theoretical framework

This study is based on a push–pull theory of migration developed by Ernst Georg Ravenstein during the 19th century. The ideological basis of the theory is that migration from rural areas to urban areas is based on specific socio-economic factors that make it possible. Mjimba and Elum (2016) argue that this can be necessitated by search for better rewarding markets for agricultural products, or some economic push factors such as the industrial growth that creates job opportunities. However, the number of people migrating to the towns and cities because of the perceived job opportunities created by industrial growth by far exceeds the number of people who will get employed. This urban influx of people creates challenges for urban areas such as urban overcrowding and other social problems (Thachil 2017).

The push–pull theory of migration from rural areas to urban areas is based on the premise that all migrations can bring about both positive and negative results. Pulling factors attract migrants to new locations, whereas pushing factors drive players to migrate their origins for settling elsewhere. The model shows the rural areas with surplus agricultural production, unemployment and poor social services. These are some of the few factors that make people decide to leave the rural areas and establish themselves in urban areas (Mathebula 2018). The job opportunities that are available in the urban areas provided mainly by industrial growth are not sufficient to address the growing unemployment. In most cases the workforce from the rural areas finds it difficult to move to and from the cities and towns and look for cheap urban accommodation. Kollamparambil (2017) posits that life in such

areas is hazardous as there is a prevalence of disease, violence and congestion and a lack of basic social services such as water, electricity and drainage systems. In most cases, the slums are built near rivers and are prone to floods. This then may amount to an additional financial burden to the municipality in terms of bringing disaster relief to the displaced people.

Research methods and design

The intention of the study was to determine the negative impact of rural–urban migration on South Africa. The research followed the qualitative method of enquiry and the main methods used in data collection were semi-structured interviews. The information collected from the respondents was supplemented by information collected from the municipalities' documents as well as photographs that were taken during data collection. The study sample constitutes of 19 participants comprising 10 participants from Ntshawini informal settlement in KwaDukuza municipality, one traditional leader, two ward councillors, three entrepreneurs with KwaDukuza Central Business (CBD) and three municipal officials. The recruitment of participants for this enquiry took place using different procedures because of the availability and non-availability of modern technology (Clarke & Braun 2018). In recruiting the two managers, one from Ilembe district municipality and KwaDukuza local municipality, an email facility was used to make an appointment with the specific managers. In order to recruit the Dube traditional council authority (iNduna) the availability had to be established with the secretary to the traditional council. The 10 households as well as 3 businesspeople in the CBD were recruited according to their availability on the day of the data collection.

The selection of the municipal employees was based on the knowledge they possess and the valuable contribution they were to make in the realisation of the research objectives. To reduce the amount of text into a standard, organised and condensed summary of the main findings, the researcher transcribed all interviews, both the notes and audio tape recordings. The researcher then read the complete interview text transcription to get a broad idea of what the participants were discussing. The researchers were now able to identify various subjects that developed from the focus groups and interviews as well as the significant points and problems the participants were raising. The themes were then created by allocating codes and classifying them into categories.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research, with ethical approval obtained from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, with project number HSSREC/00000182/2019. 17/08/2019.

Findings and discussion

The study findings indicate that most people leaving rural areas are those who have less education or unskilled.

However, as people migrate from the rural to urban destinations in search of employment opportunities, the reality does not always match with the expectations because the growing urban population seem to always surpass the labour required. This has resulted in reduced chances of getting employed for most unskilled people, with some of them resorting to criminal activities for survival. This position was confirmed by the following quote from some of the research participants:

'Amongst the people who migrate to KwaDukuza for different reasons, there are those who are hoping to find jobs. The economy at a national level shows a declining trend, and this does not produce a conducive environment for economic growth in small municipalities like KwaDukuza. At the same time, KwaDukuza is the hope of many who are looking for employment, especially in Ilembe district.' (Participant 3, manager, 2019)

The study also found that the population increase in KwaDukuza municipality and its surrounding outskirts has made it impossible for the municipality to fulfil its constitutional obligation of providing social services. According to the KwaDukuza IDP (2021/22), there are a lot of backlogs in fundamental social services. The surge in urban population has put the municipality under financial strain. Overcrowding in KwaDukuza municipality because of rural–urban migration has put significant strain on existing water and sanitation facilities as well as energy supplies. As a result, service delivery is compromised, resulting in poor waste removal, a housing backlog, a backlog in providing water and sanitation infrastructure and a backlog in updating existing infrastructure. These challenges pose major hazards to the environment and human lives because there is a disproportionate of the local municipality budget for housing projects and its implementation. Hakkim (2019) says that poor sanitation leads to environmental health hazards.

Additionally, the rural–urban migration has detrimental effects on the environment and ecology of the migration destination. According to the data collected, the local municipality does not have enough land to cater for the influx of people. This challenge of unavailability of enough land was confirmed by one of the interviewees who had the following to say:

'KwaDukuza land is dominated by sugarcane farmers and Ingonyama Trust land. The municipality has limited land with which to fulfil its mandate to provide basic accommodation. Ntshawini informal settlement needs land on which RDP houses can be built, and the success of the housing project depends on whether farmers and the Ingonyama Trust are willing to give KDM the required land. It is difficult for the small municipality like KDM to cope with the influx of people, which is increasing every year.' (Participant 9, manager, 2019)

At the same time, the situation is made more complicated as informal settlements are randomly established on the little land that the municipality has. The people are building on municipal property, and KwaDukuza municipality often gets involved when it is too late for the structures to be

demolished. Izakovicova et al. (2017) support this view by claiming that the spontaneous settlement on the urban periphery threatens ecology by modifying the use of agricultural land.

The study findings further indicate that rural–urban migration is environmentally detrimental as the migrants damage certain natural forests to build their homes, as well as having severe implications for agriculture, which obviously has an influence on food security. This position can be reflected in the following quote:

'The drainage in KwaDukuza is still a challenge. The absence or poor drainage compromises the natural environment in the sense that it leads to soil erosion as a result of pluvial flooding that often happens as a result of heavy rainfall. KwaDukuza experiences such flooding every summer, and tons and tons of rich top soil is lost to the sea. However, one can hardly blame the municipality because these houses are sometimes built where they are not supposed to be built.' (Participant 4, entrepreneur, 2019)

Accordingly, land use management should be a key component of municipal government because urbanisation may have negative environmental consequences. Mngoma, Pillay and Reddy (2011) emphasise the necessity of preserving the environment through the legislative framework, including the creation of environmental by-laws and the implementation of such by-laws. It is critical to balance up the two components of addressing historical injustices by delivering what the populace have been denied and enforcing local environmental by-laws.

Another finding by this study is that residing in urban peripheral informal settlements is not mainly caused by choice but by the element of affordability. It is the cost-of-living that divides people in metropolitan regions in terms of where they live and what they consume. One of the interviewees had the following to say:

'The affordability of services depends on how much one earns, whether employed or self-employed. The RDP houses are meant for the poor households, and the basic services speak to their financial well-being of the residents. Most people living in Ntshawini are using pit-latrines or long-drop toilets. Sewerage rates are slightly higher, and an indigent policy needs to be in place should the time come to implement billing the poor for this service.' (Participant 7, councillor, 2019)

The income levels also influence what essential services people receive and the way the same services are delivered. Slum dwellers are mostly those who cannot afford official residential housing. As a result, informal accommodations are common in the periphery of cities. The services provided to informal settlements differ from those provided to residents of the CBD and suburban areas. When compared to suburban people, this exposes informal settlement residents to health risks (Dustmann & Gorlach 2016). Residents and the environment both suffer owing to poor refuse collection. Inadequate street lighting may enhance criminal activity at night. These criminal activities could be a result of unemployment, hence the prevalence of criminal activities

since unemployment and poverty are inseparable, as the latter is a result of the former.

Furthermore, KwaDukuza local municipality offers more short- and long-term career options than other municipalities under Ilembe district municipality. As a result, the number of informal settlements has increased, causing service delivery backlogs to increase. According to the KDM IDP (2022), 12.8% of the population of KwaDukuza lives in informal settlements. This equates to 11 674 people living in precarious environments. However, Oteng-Ababio, Owusu and Asafo (2019) point out that although much is said about the negative side of rural–urban migration, the positive side of the influx of new migrants into metropolitan areas can be viewed as expanding urban boundaries. This increase in urban population drives the need to acquisition of more land for housing and industrial developments in urban areas. Increased revenue collection through rates and revenue collection for services supplied by the urban authority is also one of the long-term benefits of urban extension.

Recommendations

Radical rural infrastructural development

In rural areas, communication, health, education and transportation facilities all need to be modernised significantly. The government prioritises infrastructure development in metropolitan areas, but updating infrastructure in rural areas may take time and be costly because of the geographical location and dispersion of citizens. However, rural areas lack the necessary infrastructure to thrive, and the government should prioritise rural infrastructure development to combat rural–urban migration. Poverty causes individuals to migrate in pursuit of economic opportunities; the government should prioritise measures that help in the eradication of poverty in its desire to improve rural areas.

Encourage the development of agricultural skills

Rural municipalities in South Africa have large hectares of arable land that could be used for agricultural development, but because of a lack of skills and technical understanding, these rural communities only engage in subsistence farming rather than commercial farming. As a result, for self-development and empowerment, the government should try to invest in capacity building on rural populace. In addition, the government should increase the amount of arable land available for agricultural development.

Coordinate policies with traditional and local leaders

Policy coordination

In rural areas, there is sometimes a policy misalignment between government and community leaders. There should be open and clear channels of communication to ensure that policy development and implementation take place in the context of the challenges identified by local leaders. Hence, an increased communication and consultation between leaders and government is required.

Inclusiveness of stakeholder participation

Dealing with the challenges of urbanisation in KwaDukuza will require all stakeholders to play an active role, especially those given a constitutional mandate to do so. Ilembe district municipality should perform its task of providing water and sanitation by way of upgrading KwaDukuza Municipality water and sanitation infrastructure. Also, Ilembe district municipality should play a leading role in terms of building capacity within the four local municipalities under it. Priority is to be given to facilitating the establishment of business hubs across the municipalities in its region. This will create job opportunities in the rural municipalities, minimising migration to urban centres. Addressing the issue of unemployment through the creation of business hubs will alleviate poverty and decrease criminal activity in the region.

Conclusion

The increased informal settlement population has been a result of industrialisation and fast-paced urbanisation. This rise in the number of informal settlement inhabitants is putting a significant amount of strain on the social infrastructure and municipal facilities already in place. The factors contributing to the growth of these informal settlements, inter alia, include a lack of developed land for housing, high costs of land beyond the reach of the urban poor and a significant influx of rural migrants looking for employment in cities. Informal settlements lack the necessary minimum services and infrastructure because of their inherent ‘illegal’ status. As a result, basic services including electricity, roads, drainage, water supply, sanitation and market areas are either non-existent or informally arranged. Most informal households fall into the lowest income category. Although many of them are second- or third-generation inhabitants, migrants make up the majority. Consequently, the informal structures are not just poorly and illegally built structures but are also home to individuals who have complicated social networks, socio-economic stratifications and isolated spatial structures.

According to the research findings, rural–urban migration can be caused by a variety of variables ranging from the desire for better opportunities in life to forced departure from one’s original location as a result of climate shocks, conflicts and dissatisfaction of public services. The benefits of migration are substantial, as are the costs. The evidence examined supports the idea that migratory barriers, particularly policy-induced ones, obstruct labour market adjustment and structural transformation, possibly resulting in substantial negative economic implications in terms of growth and aggregate welfare, and are hence undesirable.

The overall conclusion drawn from the findings of the study is that South African municipalities have multiple challenges stemming from the rural–urban migration. The challenges can be summarised as an inability to provide basic services efficiently or no services at all. South Africa continues to see an increase in rural–urban migration because of a lack of

sufficient and acceptable investments in rural development. Consequently, because of the country's economic disparities, urban areas will continue to experience an influx of people looking for work. The study recognises the need of tackling rural–urban migration because it poses a substantial danger to rural development. The lack of services gives rise to health and hygiene problems and subsequently to ecological challenges.

Although climatic and other shocks may force individuals to leave their homes and migrate to cities, little is known about how push and pull migration influences destination places differently. Lastly, the research concludes that important government initiatives and investments in South Africa are executed with little attention for migratory implications. Transportation investments, limits on land sales in rural areas and workfare programmes in rural/urban areas are all examples. These policies have an impact on the benefits and costs of migration. Generally, policymakers in developing nations like South Africa should consider migration reactions when devising policies and investment programmes, because migration responses may mitigate the effects of these policies. Researchers who are assessing such policies and programmes should follow suit.

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Competing interests

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Authors' contributions

D.B.M. conceived of the presented idea and contributed to the design and implementation of the research, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript. H.W. supervised, edited and funded the research, verified the analytical methods and supervised the findings of this work. N.C. contributed to the data curation, review and editing, to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, N.C. upon reasonable request.

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